

Gordon wears his own dog tags, plus those of his father, grandfathers and great-grandfather.

WHEN Thomas Gordon retired from the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, recently, he passed the torch of three generations of family members who served — and continue to serve — to his son.

Twenty-year-old Matthew Gordon is a cadet in the Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Scranton, Pa.

Now working toward his own commission as an Army second lieutenant, the younger Gordon wears his own “dog tags,” plus those of his father and two grandfathers, and the round tag his great-grandfather Earl Gordon wore in France during World War I.

Thomas Gordon said his son, while growing up, was familiar with his grandfather’s medals, as well as with the photos and mementos of his great-grandfather’s World War I service.

“This is maybe where Matt started to get the idea to join the Army,” Gordon said. “But I never pushed Matt toward the military, nor did he ever talk about it.”

Matt joined the Army hoping the service would increase his chances of becoming a

Dog tags signifying four generations of family service are those of (from top) Matthew Gordon, Thomas Gordon, Richard Cromer, William Gordon and Earl Gordon.

Pennsylvania State Police officer. The younger Gordon hopes to serve in the Military Police Corps.

Now, Thomas Gordon said his son is finding the Army to his liking.

“He loves it. He is having so much fun,” Gordon said. “Now he’s saying, ‘maybe I’ll stay in.’”

Thomas Gordon joined the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in 1971, while attending Elizabethtown College.

The wartime service of his father and grandfather

“had a big impact on

me believing in the military and in believing in what was right, and I didn’t think that was right,” Gordon said, referring to the actions of Vietnam-era protestors. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1973.

Yet Gordon said his parents had “mixed feelings” about their son joining the Army in such troubled times.

“My dad was proud, but he had reservations because of Vietnam,” Gordon said. “My mom was very distraught. She envisioned me going off to war and coming back the same way Dad did.”

Throughout his military career Thomas Gordon wore his dog tags, plus one his grandfather wore from World War I and one of his father’s from World War II.

Thomas Gordon, who recently retired as a lieutenant colonel from the Pennsylvania Guard after 30 years of service, was last assigned as deputy director of personnel for Headquarters, State Area Command, at Fort Indiantown Gap.

While the quality of service of the Gordon family has stood up for nearly a



Earl Gordon (seated, second from right) takes a break with his comrades in France during World War I.

century, Gordon said his son's Army is different — and better — than the one he joined 30 years ago.

"In 1971, if you didn't make it in civilian society, people told you to join the Army. In these 30 years I've seen that drastically change. Civilian society can look up to the military," Gordon said.

Gordon said his younger son, 19-year-old Shane, has been talking to Army recruiters. I'd be proud if Shane chose the Army," his father said. "But it is his choice."

Gordon said if Shane does join, he'll give him a set of the tags he wore for 30 years to continue the family tradition. — *MSG Daniel Miller, HQ STARC, PAARNG Public Affairs*



MG Eugene Klynoot, deputy commander, Headquarters, State Area Command, honored LTC Thomas Gordon (second from left) during Gordon's recent retirement ceremony at Fort Indiantown Gap. Also attending were Gordon's sons, Matthew and Shane; his wife, Carol; and his father, William.



Then-CPT Beale: Delivering donations.

assistant staff chaplain, **Chaplain (MAJ) Kenneth L. Beale Jr.**, has a way for anyone who travels to pay it forward.

Beale realized that he collects many complimentary, personal health-care products from hotels where he stays. But he seldom used the excess items he brought home with him.

"I had all these bars of soap that I didn't need, but I knew someone out there does," said Beale. "I decided to donate the stuff to area shelters."

Beale isn't the only person at the 88th RSC headquarters who travels, so he spread the word and set a collection box outside his office. Since February 2001, he's collected 684 pounds of personal-care items.

The gifts go to a different shelter in the area every month. Free health-care products aren't changing anyone's life, but possibly making it a little more comfortable, Beale said.

"I would like to hear from other people who would like to keep this effort going," he said. "Just drop me an e-mail at **kenneth.beale @usarc-emh2.army.mil**," said Beale. — *SPC Tony M. Lindback, 364th MPAD, Fort Snelling, Minn.*

Beale spread the word and set a collection box in front of the door to his office.

THE movie "Pay It Forward" showed how one person, a little boy, could change the world. Trevor McKinney (Haley Joel Osment) came up with a plan to fix the things that he didn't like in the world. He called it, "pay it forward."

The idea was to do a favor for three people — something they couldn't do on their own. Instead of repaying the favor, the three people would pay it forward to three other people. With everyone paying it forward, 4,782,969 people could be helped in two weeks.

The 88th Regional Support Command's